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A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

I. The Duty of Using One's Life for Others. II. The God of Comfort. III. The Nobility of Conversion. IV. Self-Control Possible to All. V. Pilate, and his Modern Imitators. VI. The Strong to Bear with the Weak. VII. Growth in the Knowledge of God. VIII. Contentment in all Things. IX. Abhorrence of Evil. X. Privileges of the Christian. XI. The Love of Money. XII. Divine Influence on the Human Soul. XIII. Moral Affinity, the True Ground of Unity. XIV. The Value of Deep Feelings. XV. Works Meet for Repentance. XVI. Malign Spiritual Influences. XVII. The Old and the New. XVIII. The Hidden Christ. XIX. Well-Wishing not Well-Doing. XX. Sphere of the Christian Minister. XXI. Suffering, the Measure of Worth. XXII. The Victory of Hope in Sorrow. XXIII. The Crime of Degrading Men. XXIV. Self-Conceit in Morals. XXV. Morality, the Basis of Piety. XXVI. The Trinity. XXVII. The Family, as an American Institution.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

I. The Way of Coming to Christ. II. Conduct, the Index of Feeling. III. The Sympathy of Christ. IV. Retribution and Reformation. V. Counting the Cost. VI. Scope and Function of a Christian Life. VII. Human Ideas of God. VIII. The Graciousness of Christ. IX. Evils of Anxious Forethought. X. The Beauty of Moral Qualities. XI. The Problem of Joy and Suffering in Life. XII. The Apostolic Theory of Preaching. XIII. The Right and the Wrong Way of Giving Pleasure. XIV. The Perfect Manhood. XV. Dissimulating Love. XVI. The Door. XVII. Moral Theory of Civil Liberty. XVIII. Peaceableness. XIX. Soul-Drifting. XX. The Hidden Life. XXI. Discouragements and Comforts in Christian Life. XXII. Hindrances to Christian Development. XXIII. Loving and Hating. XXIV. Authority of Right over Wrong. XXV. The Power of Love. XXVI. The Preciousness of Christ.

CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

I. Watchfulness. II. Paul and Demetrius. III. Consolations of the Suffering of Christ. IV. Treasure that Cannot be Stolen. V. Bearing, but not Overborne. VI. The Holy Spirit. VII. Ideal Standard of Duty. VIII. Faults. IX. The Comforting God. X. The Name Above Every Name. XI. National Unity. XII. Social Obstacles to Religion. XIII. Christ, the Deliverer. XIV. The God of Pity. XV. Sin Against the Holy Ghost. XVI. Inheritance of the Meek. XVII. Memorials of Divine Mercy. XVIII. The Victorious Power of Faith. XIX. The Peace of God. XX. Coming to One's Self. XXI. Fragments of Instruction. XXII. The Substance of Christianity. XXIII. Spiritual Blindness. XXIV. Perfect Peace. XXV. Preparation for Death. XXVI. Fidelity to Conviction.

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THE TENDENCIES OF AMERICAN PROGRESS.

It is well for us to pause, in our career, to consider whither our national life is tending. For we are too apt to become so engrossed in our private affairs as to have but a dim and feeble sense of our relations to the life of the whole community. Or, if we cast a glance upon the tendencies of our times, it is apt to be superficial—a judgment which follows rather our disposition than our reason. To the hopeful, things are always bright; and they are always dark to the cautious. Prosperous men think the country is doing well; and the unfortunate see the signs of impending mischief and of quick-coming ruin on every hand. Men are apt to judge of the drift of things by the impressions made upon them by the things which are nearest, or by the welfare of the special cause to which they are giving their time and zeal. If that zone of life and force which is in contact with them is stormy, they feel that it is stormy away to the horizon, though but just a step beyond it may be tranquil; and if the affairs in which men have embarked their chief zeal and their affections are withheld, and are declining, they are apt to think that the whole work of God in the world is weary and slow-paced.

While, then, it is proper that we should recognize superficial prosperity, and personal prosperity, and all forms of experience from the personal stand-point, we are far more earnest to inquire whether under the surface the tendency of things is onward and upward, or level, or working downward. But in order to this we must have some determinate rule of measure. We must not judge by the eye, nor by our senses, nor by a transient criterion.

The most obvious, and historically the first, condition of prosperity in any community is physical thrift, material wealth; and surely there can be no national life of any great worth without that. For there must be prosperity in material things if there is to be prosperity in moral things in the last estate. Still, a nation may be prospered in

the field, and at the loom, and on the ship, and on the shore, and yet be degraded and declining. For material welfare, although it be an indispensable element of national prosperity, is the lowest, and is to be subordinated to all others. Above it is the social and civil development of a nation. Far superior in importance to mere physical wealth is the wealth which comes from institutions, from laws, from the conduct of the people, and from the whole course of civilized society. But yet higher than this is moral and spiritual good. For without faith civilization itself soon becomes tame and powerless.

The highest prosperity, then, is associated with spiritual good. Next to that is social; and lowest of all is material. And in this order we are to judge of prosperity. That material good is prosperous which is working toward the social and toward the spiritual. That social and civil condition of society is wholesome which recognizes the higher law of religious development.

Now, in looking upon our national condition it is not enough that we see unbounded prosperity in the farm, at the forge, in the shop: we must ask whether this prosperity lies in the line of intelligence, of real virtue; whether it guides itself by moral principle.

On the other hand, in looking upon the imperfections and positive evils which attend the various elements of national life, men are not to be discouraged because there is much in them that is still evil; nor because in some places things are going backward, like eddies upon mighty rivers. For this is the law of all progress. But are things, *on the whole*, tending toward, or away from, moral elements? That will determine the question of prosperity.

Look, then, at our own condition territorially. What other nation has such a field for extension, such a field for development, such a field for material prosperity? Russia alone, perhaps, of all nations, has a territory as extensive as America. In all except bulk though, how different! Our climate, from the north line to the very gulf, is congenial to industry. There is no league in which climatic influences forbid prosperity; but the Russian climate is too rigorous. Through perhaps one third, or one-half—through vast spaces at any rate, it is unfavorable even to life itself, and life can never be developed into any great degree of society-force. Our soil, except a central tract (and that less barren than men suppose) is cultivatable throughout. Theirs is largely sterile. Our population is English-speaking, and homogeneous in ideas, though heterogeneous in origin. But all this, a prodigious condition of power if other things favor, is useless,—and, worse than useless, will be corrupting,—if there are not other elements of prosperity than merely that which is given us, of territory.

Then, our people carry with them every where self-government,

and *a genius for it*. Partly, this is the quality of race. We spring mainly from a stock in which inheres the tendency to government, and self-government. And partly it is a thing learned. Our people have learned it ; and government, therefore, and laws, go with every colony just as surely as yokes and harnesses go with their teams and herds. Men never emigrate without carrying their household wealth and the material for employing the soil in husbandry. But tools and implements are no more necessary in their judgment than are the institutions and the customs which make men societies. Wherever you throw a hundred Americans, you may be sure that almost their first thought will be to constitute themselves into a body politic. They do it as naturally as water comes together in crystals when cold congeals it. They come by a kind of elective affinity under laws and under constitutions.

Contrast that great and unfortunate nation, France, with our own in this respect. Their self-governing instinct seems never to have been developed. The tendency is feeble, and cultivation has never been applied to it. How to be governed they but just know ; and how to govern themselves, not at all. But with us this is one of the most marked national features, the indispensable necessity of being governed, and the indispensable determination to let nobody do it for us, but to do it ourselves.

Our people, also, carry institutions which are to moral force what machinery is to physical force. Institutions are but the condensations of power. They are artificial persons, as if were, to whom is given an unwearable existence—a life longer than the life of those that made them. They are the devices of civilization for storing up and preserving and fitting out moral things, and are indispensable to the strength and constancy and perpetuity of communal life.

But all these are but conditions. What now are the general tendencies of the material prosperity of America which are being developed, with such a territory, with such a people on it, with such civic advantages ? On the whole, are they toward intelligence, and morality, and a higher spiritual growth ?

1. The mass of our working population, I think, were never so well clothed, so bountifully fed and so well housed, as they are now ; and the tendency is not backward, but forward. Our working population, to the very lowest stage and class, tend to more refinement in their food, more taste in their apparel, and more culture in their dwellings, year by year. In other words, the lowest material conditions are working upward, and not downward. Plainness of apparel, and of circumstances surrounding, are not signs and tokens either of civil growth or of Christianity. The general impression

is, that, as nations are better, they will be economical. I think, on the contrary, they will be profuse, and have the means of being so. The impression is that they will be unadorned. I think they will be more glorious than Solomon was, in all his apparel. The impression is that the law of simplicity in the sense of littleness of having and using characterizes virtue and religion. Far from it. As you go toward the savage state, you go away from complexity, from multitudinous power, down toward simplicity; and when you come to the lowest state—to the simplicity of men that wear skins and leather apparel, and live in huts and caves—you come to the fool's ideal of prosperity. But from that low animal condition starts development, and nations go on opening their faculties; and every faculty becomes a market, and demands supply. And the more culture a man has, the more parts of his nature there are which ask for material, for institutions, for raiment, for comforts of every kind, the more there is in the single man demanding these things, the more must his circumstances open up, and become rich and potential. And in looking upon the condition of the community, if you find that they are increasing in the variety of their food, in the quality of their food, and in the excellence of cooking their food; if you find that their dwellings are growing better and better from period to period; if you find that their furniture is more beautiful, answering other ends than merely the mechanical and physical ends—ministering to taste, ministering, if you will, to luxury—if you find these things, they are signs of upward development and of growth. These are the signs which we find all the way through our people, clear down to the bottom. And we are beginning to find them, as I knew we should, among the Freedmen themselves. For no sooner was their bondage broken than they began to feel that they were no longer animals, but men, and began, partly from imitation, and partly from that instinct which is common to all men, to gather around about themselves these evidences of growth, development, power.

We do not think that anywhere on the globe men, on the whole, live so well as in America—or grumble so much! But that is an indispensable thing. For as men live better, their criterion of life grows with the betterment. Taste increases in a greater ratio, oftentimes, than possession; and men are dissatisfied, not so much by what they have, as by the proportion which what they have bears to their ideal. It is our ideals that make us grumblers. And so there is some comfort in that.

The tendency, also, is to augment the conveniences, the beauty, and the resources of homes. There is universal social ambition among the laborers of America. They feel the dignity of citizenship. Power

and its responsibility has produced upon them the effect that we knew it would. It has educated, it has inspired, it has developed them. And the consequence is, that they feel, not that they are a class of working men, but that they are members of society. They call themselves *citizens*. They belong to the common people. They are a part of the one great loaf; and though each one is but a crumb, unbroken, every crumb is loaf. And this, too, is a sign of growth in the right direction. Show me a man who is content with things just as they have been, when he has it in his power to make them better, and I will show you a man whose tendency is the wrong way. He is by just so much less than a man who is contented with inferior conditions of manhood.

There are other signs of thrift. The great fermentation and combinations everywhere pervading working men are full of promise—and vexation! They vex the present, but they will bless the future. This has nothing to do with the wisdom or the folly of any of the particular measures which the laboring men may take. All causes which come up from the bottom of society find their way up by the hardest; and mistakes are the rude nurses of ignorant men—rude, but faithful. No class and no nation ever was raised from the bottom by very much help from the top. Thus far men have scarcely discerned, and certainly have not learned, that superiority is an ordination of God, and makes the superior class the nurses and helpers of the inferior. But aristocracy has grown out of superiority, for the most part. As soon as any class has had the power to rise, it has separated itself from the lower class, and called itself cream, and desired to be skimmed off!*

And so it has been that class after class, as we go down in society, have been obliged to fight their own battle, and largely to fight it against those who should have been their helpers; and instead of succor from those who were wiser and stronger than themselves, they have had resistance.

Now, it is not strange that when men are fighting their way up from the bottom of society, they are at first ignorant of the best modes; that they make mistakes in the instruments selected, and in the measures devised. It is not presumption against the validity and excellence of any cause that its advocates are making many mistakes. Nothing could be worse than contentment in degradation. And there is nothing, with all its mistakes, that is more auspicious than aspiration and enterprise among laboring men. Therefore when I behold them counseling, and gathering themselves into innumerable forms of association, and learning among themselves brotherhood, and forming habits of common thought, common purposes, and common government, whatever may

be the inconveniences of the present, I regard such things as pre-eminently auspicious. They show that the laboring classes are not dead; that they are not inert; that they are a living mass; and that they mean to live to some purpose, and are finding out the way to do it. My heart goes with these my fellow-citizens under such circumstances, even when my head does not.

Very significant, too, is the assimilative power of American institutions, as shown in the condition and the conduct of foreign labor in our midst. For it is not our native-born citizens alone that are laborious, that are enterprising, that are accumulating property, that are good citizens, and obedient to the law. There have been thrown upon our shores vast masses, now almost uncountable, of men born under other skies, other institutions, and other customs, with other ideas. They are poured upon us by millions. Many have feared that they would change the color of the nation; that they would gradually undermine its laws; that, like the flowing of the stream which will chafe even rocks, so at last, by continual attrition, this vast mass of men pouring in upon our institutions would take the temper out of them. But they have not. Our institutions are stronger to-day, with all their population from abroad in them and under them, than they were fifty years ago, or even twenty-five years ago. And in those periods of critical peril when everything seemed put in jeopardy, there was no part of our whole population from the north to the south, or from the east to the west, that was more patriotic than our foreign population. And when, afterward, still other moral perils ensued, and the credit of the nation was at stake, there were no parts of our population, taking the country through, that were honester and truer to the national integrity than our foreign population.

And why should they desire to destroy those institutions for which they voyaged the deep and left their own land? It is the peculiar advantage of popular laws and institutions, that they are just such laws and institutions as common men want, and therefore are just such as common men do not want to destroy. Except in a few cities, and, to be plain, except from one nationality, we have scarcely heard a word of lawlessness from the great throng of our foreign population. The Irish are an ingenuous people. They are very frank and open, and they usually speak out what they think, and frequently act too openly and impulsively; and I must admit that there has been some trouble springing from them. Yet I say without hesitation that in fifty years all the trouble will have been a cheap price to have paid for the good qualities which that stock will infuse into the Anglo-Saxon stock. It is *good stock*, though it is very hard to work up. But with this single exception good-naturedly named, where have we found trouble from our foreign population?

With occasional and sporadic exceptions, where have we found better citizenship than among them? Where have we found men that, on the whole, not only were conducting themselves better, but were contributing more directly to the welfare of the state, or of the regions where they had settled down, than our emigrant population? They mingle among us; and in one generation they are as indistinguishable from us as if they and their parents had been born in our midst. They do not clog our courts; they do not mob our streets; they do not make aggression upon law nor upon civil liberty. Their virtues, their wisdom, and their industry we ought to recognize, both with surprise and with gratitude.

Nor do I believe that it will be in the power of China to do what all Scandinavia cannot do. I am just as little afraid of the East, or the West—no, I do not know which way China is—I am as little afraid of the *Oriental* as I am of the European. Coming with another tongue, not easily to be changed, and coming with a very different race-temperament, and with very different culture, it may take longer to digest them; but I think that even a Chinaman, when he has been thoroughly swallowed by American institutions, will, though he lies long by them, be at last digested, and that he will make good blood withal. So that I am not afraid of the importation of Chinamen. And though they do not understand it, others will, when I say, *All hail! and Welcome!*

There may be many who object to the Chinese on account of their compulsory carriage hither. They are ashamed to admit that this country is shut against the poor and the laboring classes of any land under heaven; but they find fault with the carriage of them by enforced emigration. "Let them come freely," say they. Oh yes, let them come freely, say I, only let them *come!* As for letting them come freely, here are both hands for that. But the difficulty is not that it is an enforced emigration, but that it is a competitive labor. And on that ground I say, shame, *shame* be to any class of men who have themselves made their fortunes by bringing in cheap labor against our own native labor, and have established themselves with our full welcome, and then turn to repel others who come just as they came, bearing what they bore willingness to work, and the ability to work cheaper than our own laborers!

For the law of God is that men, as they come up, cannot afford to work cheap. Nothing can work cheap except that which *is* cheap. If you have only a hand to sell, with no thought in it, and no skill in it, you can afford to sell that hand cheap; but if that hand has forty years of experience and thought; if that hand represents the whole machinery of your mind and soul, you cannot afford to sell it cheap—

and I do not want to have you. And in every community there must be these classes—the lowest and most ignorant, who have never gone to school, nor had the means of culture of any sort, will of course work cheap; and they will work cheap because they bring so little in their work. But as working is instruction, they come up; and every step they come up they give more, and ask more, and get more because they give more. It is the *quid pro quo* that makes the price all the time. It is the great law of equivalents.

And so, while one class of foreign population, taking advantage of the opportunity offered, have been laying the foundations of a moderate competence, and have been going up, the prices of their labor have been rising. And I do not object to that. I want the prices of their labor to rise, because I believe that they give more in the same number of hours than they did when they were unskilled laborers.

But we want another class below them. And when *they* come up, we shall want another class below *them*. “The workman is worthy of his hire;” but it is one of the misfortunes of ignorance that it does not know how to be wise.

The very thing that we need more now than almost anything of the lower interests of our land, is labor. With our vast intermediary territories—that land which for a hundred years will hardly see seed-corn for lack of the hands to open the furrows and plant it—are we in a condition to turn away any man who will come here honestly to labor and to thrive? I say, God bless the Swede; and God bless the Dane; and God bless the German, a hundred times over; and God bless the Frenchman and the Italian, if they come here to be good citizens; and God bless the canny Scotchman, and the sturdy Englishman, and the mercurial Irishman; and God bless a little more the Chinaman,—because he needs a little more!

On the whole, then, there is occasion for courage and for thanks in regard to labor, and in regard to the laborer. Labor is remunerative. The field for it is almost illimitable. Its product is wonderful. The laborers are no longer brute beasts. A change is going on perpetually. There is fermentation, there is circulation, there is emulation; and little by little our laboring classes are coming up in intelligence; in organizing power; in forecast; in refinement; in the amplitude of their domestic conditions; in all the things that go to make men happy here, and that make virtue easy and aspiration natural.

And it is a theme for thanksgiving to-day that, while other nations are receiving the terrible scourge; while upon almost a whole continent labor is suspended, or works only at the forge and the foundry, for purposes of destruction, throughout the length and breadth of this great land labor whistles, and sings, and is happy.

2. Again, the general aspect of wealth in America is such as to give occasion for thanksgiving to-day. The prodigious facilities for developing wealth are only just beginning to be perceived by the mass. The future fortunes of America will be fabulous. I suppose that there are to be fortunes on this continent, compared with which what were called fortunes once will seem like penury. The power of organizing seems to be almost the only limit. The wealth is here. It is easy to be developed. It is easy to be concentrated. It is growing easier every decade of years to be administered. And to be the owner of a million dollars will not make a man eligible to the class of rich men much longer. I look forward into that "golden" future, literally, which is opening before us, and marvel whether the most poetic dreams of growing wealth may not fall short of the reality. By and by there is to be a genius shown—there are yet to be reputations, and very noble reputations—for organizing and amassing wealth, compared with which we have had almost nothing in the past history of nations.

There are some who think that riches are always and only dangerous. Riches are dangerous simply because they are power; and all power is dangerous. Power is dangerous whether it be legislative or moral power. Even variety of influence is dangerous. And wealth is more dangerous than other forms simply because it is a more various power, and has certain facilities for adaptation and use which belong to almost no other power. But it is impossible to civilize a community without riches. I boldly affirm that no nation ever yet rose from a barbarous state except through the mediation of wealth earned. I affirm that the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen will be invalid and void if it does not make them active workmen, and teach them how to make money. And although the evidences of the conversion of the individual are not that he knows how to make money; yet in a nation no religion is a good religion that does not teach industry, and the thrift which comes from industry. For the law of communities is not analogous to the law of the individual. It is possible, in a great, rich, civilized community, for an individual man to be powerful, and preëminently so, and yet be poor; but no poor man can be of very great validity in a poor community. The community must be rich if he is to have power. It is the contrast, it is the self-denial, it is the moral efficiency without those other and external instrumentalities, that make him so marked, if he labors with voluntary poverty. But no *community* can develop into permanent civilization unless it has power ministered to it very largely through the civilizing influences of wealth. This alone will give the activity required; this alone will give the leisure in which men soften, and meliorate, and grow beautiful.

Now, the dangers of wealth in America are very great. They are even greater than we fear. Organized wealth is one great danger which lies ahead, looming up gigantically. And yet, wealth must be organized. The community will have to find ways in which to protect itself, however. If wealth be organized to do as it pleases, it becomes very dangerous. Nevertheless, organized wealth is yet to be a benefactor of the community to an extent that we have never suspected. It tends now to despotism; but it is because it is in the nascent stages.

Great corporations are dangerous. They do not need to be. Scores of millionaires organized together in concert to accomplish great ends need not be any more dangerous than the State is. There may be an empyrean of wealth; and it may be mischievous; but it does not need to be. At present it is so, and is to be watched against. Wealth tends to control all other power in society. Especially is it so in democratic societies, where we have no kings, no nobles, no fixed estate of honor, no titles, no positions which are permanent, and where wealth and character make the distinction, very largely, between man and man. Under such circumstances wealth tends to absorb into its own hands all the power in society. But it is not necessarily so. It is not necessary that riches should control courts and legislatures, and the franchise itself. It is not necessary that wealth, which owns the market, should also own the civil power, though it is a danger that is to be met and overcome. It tends to feed the lower nature; it tends to change refinement to luxury, and luxury to corruption; but it does not need to do this.

These are valid, imminent, pressing dangers, that never have been exaggerated; and yet they are not dangers which necessarily attend the accumulation and organization of great wealth in any community. It will require the vigilance of statesmen, and of philanthropists, and of good citizens, to guard against the dangers of wealth. But it is not philosophical to look only on the diseases of a community. It is wise to look at its hygienic qualities as well.

Is harm and danger, then, all that wealth is accomplishing in our midst? No. It is the almoner of employment, as it is the almoner of bread. It is the almoner of the family. It is the almoner of unnumbered households. It is the almoner of independence. And are we to forget that capital—that is, wealth in activity—with all its friction, is far safer than invested wealth, lying dead? It is money that is working that keeps bright, and it is money that is working that keeps men bright. Although working money is by various exigencies brought into circumstances where it must be limited, overruled, and curtailed, yet we are not to forget on this account that at the same

time it is that which is vivifying industry to the bottom of society, and that is carrying out on its broad hands and arms innumerable blessings to every part of the community. The very circulation of the community would cease, almost, the moment that wealth should cease to exist. It is the blood that carries nutrition into every part of the whole system.

Riches, therefore, may be said to be the poor man's providence, provided it is riches in use, and not invested. When men have retired from business, and their wealth is laid up, there is less danger from it; but there is less benefit from it at the same time. The dangers which we see threatening us are not less than real; but looking comprehensively at the general tendency of wealth in America, it is working in subordination to intelligence and to domestic virtue. There is a vast deal of ignorant using of wealth. A great many men use their property for ostentation; and a great many employ it for useless pride; and a great many use it for selfishness, and even for vice. But how to use money is an art just as much to be learned as how to make it. There are a great many men that know how to make money, who do not know how to use it; and there are a great many men that know how to spend money, who do not know how to make it. Both sides are to be learned. Neither comes by nature. There is art in it as much as there is in learning to paint, or to carve, or to fabricate at the blacksmith's forge, or at the joiner's bench. And men must not be expected to learn it in a generation. There are hundreds and thousands of men who began with literally nothing, and have ended with two or three hundred thousand dollars which they have to organize and commute into forms of civilization; and is it strange that a great many men do not know how to do it; that they sometimes build and furnish extravagantly and out of taste? My wonder is that there is so much taste and discretion exercised. For if you go through town after town, and village after village, and city after city, you will find that extravagant building and furnishing are the exception—not the rule. The rule is that wealth which has been earned wisely is being expended discreetly. I think that wealth to-day is being used more for building up American homes than for almost all other purposes. I think that the people live in better houses here than they do in any other country, the world over. I am sure they do. Men of the same rank in life, of the same professions, and of the same conditions of wealth, live in better houses, more amply stored, and with more conveniences, here than anywhere else. There is more ingenuity in the construction of houses here—and it requires more ingenuity to keep them constructed!—than in any other land on the globe.

Nowhere else will you find so many homes that are filled with elegance. Nor are we to suppose that all the elegance goes with the city and the town. You shall hear the sound of the piano in every cluster of three houses throughout the land, almost, from ocean to ocean. And if there is anything in this world that is a luxury, it is an instrument of music. You cannot eat it; you cannot take it for medicine; you cannot sell it—generally; it has none of those earmarks which men attach to other property; and yet there is almost nothing else which men so much covet everywhere. The carpenter, the black-smith, the farmer, if he has a daughter, wants an instrument of music. And it has ceased to be considered extravagant. The statistics of the piano-manufacturers of America (and they are not all in New York, nor in Boston, nor in Baltimore, nor in Philadelphia: go back into the inland villages, go into some mid-county of the State of New York, and you shall find there rising before your sight, never heard of before, a factory of pianos, that sells its hundreds and thousands of pianos every year, though it would seem as though there were more thousands made in this city than could be bought by all the world put together)—the statistics of the manufacturers of that one single item epitomize the extent of the home comfort and elegance to which the people of America have attained. It is remarkable. There is no land on earth where individual men earn so much money as in America. I suppose that the money-producing force in our country is greater than that of any other people (—a hint to tax-payers!) Not only that, but this money-producing power is accompanied by a greater power to use money for the furtherance of home purposes here than anywhere else. For land is so cheap that it is hardly considered treasure in the same sense that it is in Europe, where it is almost impossible to get it, and where to own land, as in England, is almost to have a title, there being but some twenty-five thousand land owners in all Great Britain. But in America land is so cheap that it is no sign that a man is wealthy because he owns land—oftentimes the contrary!

People, therefore, in the administration of wealth, accumulate not so much great estates as houses, and well-furnished houses. Is it a strange thing to go into a workingman's house, and to find his five hundred volumes? It is less frequent than it should be, but it is not at all strange. Is it strange to find in the houses of plain laborers magnificent libraries? Old Dowse of Cambridge, a tanner and currier all his life, bears witness. He had one of the finest libraries in all Massachusetts. It was composed of the choicest books, admirably selected, and finely bound, and they were books that he read, too. Cambridge was to have had it, but some of the people there saw fit to

insult him because he was a tanner and currier, and so he slipped by them, and gave it to the Historical Society or some other institution in Boston ; and there it is ; and when I want to go on a pilgrimage, and cannot go to Mecca nor to Jerusalem, I go there to see the tanner and currier's library.

It is not strange to find a man who works at the forge all day, grim and grizzly, going home at night to pursue historical reading. I know farmers that I should dislike to meet in an argument (unless I was on the same side with them!) And they are not cases here and there, selected. It is characteristic of our working people, and of men that are well to do, that they are growing up to make the town in which they live beautiful and intelligent. Their houses themselves are often models of taste and convenience, and are setting examples which one by one the neighbors follow. And so, in the train of industry comes wealth, and of wealth, taste, and of taste, beneficence ; and refinement flashes throughout the land. And when I hear men speaking bitterly against wealth, I notice that almost invariably they are men who have not got it. When I hear them deride moneyed men, moneyed kings, moneyed princes, it seems to me that they have not well considered the facts. They only think of here and there, it may be, a Crœsus. But if you follow the more moderate fortunes ; if you look into the whole career of money in this land, not the Nile, when it comes down with its annual freshet and distributes the slime which is the riches of Egypt over the circumjacent territory, is so great a blessing to Egypt, as is the great diffusion of wealth in this country to America. And nowhere else does wealth so directly point towards virtue in morality and spirituality in religion, as in America.

So then, I am not afraid to rejoice. Get rich, if you can. Pay anything for riches. Anything ? Yes, pay yourself ; pay weariness ; pay head-cracking thought ; pay anything but this—do not pay your honor, nor your affection, nor your simplicity, nor your faith in man, nor your love to God. But whatever you can take out of the body, pay. And when you shall have amassed wealth, it will be God's power, if you are wise to use it, by which you can make your home happier, the community more refined, and the whole land more civilized.

Wealth in America, also, is public-spirited (I thought I had got through ; but I find two or three more heads). The classes that are amassing money furnish a large proportion of all the funds by which the active charities of society are carried on. The buildings which decorate our community are from the hands, mostly, of wealthy men. Architecture is the adopted child of wealth. The fine arts could scarcely exist but for the interposition of wealth. The universities,

and academies, and colleges, and public libraries, and reading rooms, and halls for lectures, are the fruit of liberal wealth in America. Cornell, Vassar, Cooper, Williston, Lawrence, and a hundred others, are significant American names. And there are more coming forward, who yet will not simply be known by their money among those that love them, but whose names will become symbolic of some great public charity, or some great public spirit.

Wealth is searching out the neglected classes, is distributing from our cities vagabond children; is opening schools for the laboring classes, to teach them all mechanic arts. I may safely say that no public need can be wisely presented to the wealth of America, and not be liberally, and at times munificently, taken care of. In other lands, governments give much for public institutions; but in America the great bulk of the means required to build up the institutions of civilization, and to support them, is contributed by the people, and by the business men of the people.

Wealth, then, like its owners, has its devil and its temptation; it has its mistakes and perversions; it has its great dangers to society; but its blessings are a hundred-fold. And, on the whole, the general tendency of wealth is such as to lead me to-day to thank God for the increasing wealth of America. May it ever be sanctified. May it ever learn nobler uses, and aspire higher and higher, until the symbolism of the heavenly state, where the very streets are paved with gold, shall be reproduced in the realities and actualities of our life here on earth.

3. I meant to speak of the cause of education, and the reasons for thanksgiving in that direction; and also of the progress of civilization, and all forms of refinement. I can, however, not even mention them, in detail. I only, in closing, shall speak of the religious condition of the land, as a grand reason for thanksgiving.

4. There are many signs, which, if taken alone, will distress the mind, and so distress many timid souls. Such is the prevalence of scientific scepticism, such is the subversion of old landmarks, and the setting aside of cherished beliefs, and the letting go of old systems, and the coming in of violent actions and reactions of men that have drunk new wine (for truth is intoxicating to men whose heads are not strong), that there is an impression that religion is losing ground; that it is becoming an old story—a superstition. But this scene is enacted every three or four hundred years; and religion comes up every time stronger and stronger. I think religion is like the grass of the meadow, which, when burnt over, lies black and charred, but the ashes of which are a stimulating manure, which afterwards fosters a growth that is stronger than that to which the violence was done. And my faith in religion is not in the church, and not in doctrines, and not in books,

and not in ministers, nor in anything external to man, but in that nature which God created, and which makes religion indispensable to man. Until man himself dies, there will be a faith, and that faith will fashion to itself both beliefs and services of devotion.

On the other hand, there was never, probably, so intelligent a faith as there is to-day, in so many men. Never were there so many men who thought so much on the subject of religion, and read so much, and argued so much, and looked so far into the themes of their belief as to-day. Not among the educated classes alone, but among plain people of the country, I think there is more reading, and more thinking, and more real heart-interest in religion than ever before.

Then there is a drawing together, a more kindred feeling, which is taking the place of the rancor and sectarian bitterness which prevailed not a great while ago, in many directions.

And it is very noticeable that the different sects of religion are softening, and that men are coming together in conference who only a few years ago thought it their duty to hate and club one another. This growing spirit of love and fellowship in differing churches is one of the signs of the growth of religion.

Religious ethics, also, are more widely diffused. Though there may not be in the general mind as much belief in doctrinal religion as there once was, there is more belief in the ethics of religion than there was ever before. The standards of belief that are set up by the word of God are more universally accepted and applied to-day than formerly they were. Governments conform to the Christian spirit more than ever they did before. Jurisprudence seeks to measure itself more than ever according to the equity that was in Christ Jesus. The heart is regulating itself more by those great laws of simplicity and truth and righteousness, or justice, if I may so say, than ever before. And even business is seeking, among all its contortions, to cast the devil of dishonesty out of itself. I think business never before acknowledged so high a standard as it does to-day. And while the belief in creeds and formularies may have changed, the belief in ethical standards of religion was never so universally employed as to-day.

And humanity—which is sympathy for man in his sorrow and in his need—when was there ever so much of it? When, in any age of the world since Christ was lifted up on Calvary, has such a scene been presented as to-day is witnessed, when France is humbled? My heart is sore for her. And though I know that the wheat before it is bread must be ground; and though I believe in the loaf, yet, when the wheat is living men, I cannot bear to see the grinding. To-day, one vast nation is treading another vast nation under foot; and all the out-lying world around—England, with all her dependencies, Germany

itself, America, Italy, and all the other nations—by bazars, by fairs, by collections in churches, and by contributions of public-spirited men, is pouring out a tide of wealth to relieve the sufferers. And if war must be, humanity stands by to bind up the wounds that war makes. When before was there such a looking-on, such a spectatorship? In regard to the inhuman wars of the world, humanity was never so widespread. Never was there such sensibility among the nations of the earth as there is to-day. A benevolent or cordial and coöperative kindness in the upbuilding of society never was wider than to-day. And faith in God—not perhaps according to your definition nor according to mine, but faith in an overruling power; faith in an unerring wisdom; faith in a goodness which is paternal; faith in One who looks upon the whole human race as his family, and not as a despot looks upon his subjects; faith that leads men to see roseate colors in the heaven, and not crushing bolts; faith in God, as the almighty good, was never stronger, and never was growing so fast, nor so deep.

Here, then, is our survey. Our territorial condition is prosperous. Our material prosperity is eminent, and it is tending upward rather than downward. Our labor and our laborers are prospering; and they are working upward. Wealth, with all its tendencies, on the whole, is on the line of development toward moral and not toward physical things. Education is widely prevalent, and is taking in more perfectly every class. Refinement is becoming the indispensable element of all prosperity. Religion itself, though losing many of its antique forms and services, as a spirit and as a controlling influence, was never so strong. I thank God for all the signs of the times. I thank God for the health and for the prosperity of the nation.

And now, I have but one word to say more: as we have been put in the van among nations to develop principles in their practical forms that were only known as seed-corn in other lands, my heart's ambition is, first, for the welfare of this whole land, for the sake of the burden of the population which it carries. God bless America. Not because I was born in it; not because it is my America, and because I receive the reflection of its glory, and a dividend of its power. I am not insensible to these things; yet not no those accounts that are personal to me do I implore God's blessing upon America; but because this continent carries such a burden of humanity that its weal or woe will be like an eternal weal or woe, infinite, endless. May God, for the sake of neighboring peoples, bless this land. And as God is making us wise, and rich, and strong, and expert, and fearless, may He take the lion and the bear out of our nature, and give us the spirit of the dove, that we may stand frowning on our shores against no foreign people; that we may be no

band of robbers to filch and to steal from the feeble and the poor. May God give us magnanimity and power and riches, that we may throw the shadow of our example upon the poor, the perishing, and the ready-to-be-destroyed, for their protection. And cursed—cursed of God, and of men cursed—be that man who counsels the red right hand of war except when it is needful to fight for our own existence! We have no war that we want to wage except the war of righteousness in ourselves. It is not for us to bombard and destroy other nations, and to follow the vices of tyrannies. What is the use of the reign of the common people, where is the glory of democracy, if it can but ape, and with greater cruelty, the mischiefs of despotism? Let kings war; let aristocrats war; but the common people of a great republic should own the brotherhood of man. And, instead of raising aloft the red hand, let them throw the nursing arm of protection around about their neighbors, and call all men their brethren, and dwell together in fealty, in unity, in sympathy, and in happiness.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Almighty God, we thank thee for the promise which thou hast made unto the Church, and for all the glory of that latter-day which, far away and dim, hangs like a golden haze above the future. We rejoice to believe that men shall not forever debase themselves; that the time shall come when the name of God shall be beloved of all men, and when that love which prevails in heaven shall flow through all the earth, and war be heard no more, and nations vex each other no longer; and when peace and righteousness shall prevail everywhere. We thank thee, O Lord! that we see some of the blessed signs and tokens of this coming glory. Not that it is already established; for men do hate. Men destroy thy heritage, and deface thine image, yet. The power of the lower life is greater than the power of the spiritual life. But we behold on every side the signs and the tokens of spring; not fruits yet, nor even flowers, but the buds, are apparent. And we rejoice to believe that the time shall assuredly come, and that we shall behold it from the other land if not from this, when all the earth shall see thy salvation.

And now, we pray that we may labor in our day and generation 'for the fulfillment of thy righteous will in our own nation. We thank thee that thou hast given us our breath and our life in this goodly land. We thank thee for all the privileges which we have—all that are natural, and all that are derived from the wise laws and institutions of our fathers. We thank thee for the path through which thou hast led us, growing brighter and brighter, and more and more beneficent. Thou hast ordained a place for this people's march; and though at times thou hast chastised us, and passed us through the fiery furnace, yet it has been for good. And thou that hast ordained war hast ordained peace, and with peace four-fold prosperity.

We thank thee especially for the mercies of the year that has gone; that the husbandman has sown his seed in hope, that his hope has not been

disappointed, and that the harvest has more than fulfilled the expectation of sowing.

We thank thee for the abundance which now gives so much to the need of those who are poor and are feeble. We thank thee for the open hand and the bounty of those that have to spare. And we beseech of thee that throughout all our land there may be given to this people a larger heart, and a feeling of sincere sympathy and of true brotherhood. We thank thee that thou hast given us rest within our borders during the past year; that all the interests of society have been peacefully pursued; that schools have prospered; that colleges have thriven; that churches have been founded, or have been built up; that the word of life has been preached with power from on high.

We thank thee for all the household happiness which has been vouchsafed to us. Our lives have been spared. Thou hast been gracious unto our children. Thou hast multiplied our mercies. Thy judgments have been few, and they have been tempered with very great goodness.

We thank thee for our personal experience; for all the hopes that we have. And now we desire, as in our own homes separately, and in our own hearts, so collectively and together, to give thanksgiving and praise to thee for all the year, and all thy varied manifestations therein. We commend our households, and our state, and this nation, to thy care for the years that are yet to come. Lord God of our fathers, yet be the guide of this people. Be thou their judge and their lawgiver. And we pray that great things may yet be done by this people, for peace, for happiness, for the whole world's regeneration. Let thy kingdom, long predicted, begin to come—that kingdom in which dwelleth righteousness. Oh! let us hear the footsteps, not of one who shall tread down nations in his wrath, but of Him of the pierced feet. Grant, O Lord! that his coming may be speedy, with all the signs of power and of glory. And let the whole earth see his salvation.

And now accept, we beseech of thee, the service which we offer up to thee,—our prayers, our praises, all the services of instruction. May we rejoice before thee in the hours of this day that yet remain; and may our hearts be glad in the blessing of our God. And when all these earthly experiences are past, be pleased to give us an exceeding and abundant entrance into the joys of thine other land, where we will praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, forever more. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON

Our Father, wilt thou grant thy blessing to rest upon the word spoken. Grant that our hopes, and our courage, and our aspirations, and our yearnings for the future, may not be in vain. Accept our humble acknowledgments of our unworthiness; our acknowledgments of thy great mercy to us, and to our fathers, and to us their posterity. And as thou hast guided us by thy law and counsel hitherto, so continue to guide this great nation, making it greater—making it great for goodness; great for purity; great for the prosperity of men. And may we live to see it a nation not only peaceful, but breathing the spirit of peace through all the disturbed nations of the earth. Hasten the day when, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, all nations shall know thee and fear thee. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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